OBSERVATIONS

ON

THE POLITICAL LIFE

OF

MR. PITT.

DE MAGISTRATU DICERE VERUM QUID VETAT.

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MDCCLXXXVIII.

TO

Winchcombe Henry Hartley, Eſq.

SIR,

I HAD formerly the happineſs to obſerve thoſe patriotic virtues which glow ſo warmly in your breaſt;—excuſe me, if I ſay, I caught the flame, and, with ſo bright an example, ſtudied to cheriſh them in my own.

The *amor vera patriæ* has ever been the ſole motive which has actuated you;—no intereſted views have interfered to bias your judgment, or pervert your conduct. I need

need not ſay, that your moſt determined foe never attempted to attribute improper motives to you.

Your endeavours, though unſucceſsful, leave you that conſciouſneſs of rectitude which whole worlds cannot purchaſe, or the greateſt earthly honours or employments confer.

Continue, my dear Sir, to ſerve your country faithfully, and you will be bleſt with ſucceſs, and crowned with applauſe.

Give me leave to tell the Berkſhire freeholders, they diſmiſſed from their ſervice as able, as independent, and as honeſt a man as ever graced the Britiſh ſenate. That they have regretted their conduct, I well know; that they will call on you, to recover,

ver, what in an unguarded moment they ſurrendered to the minion of a miniſter, I make no doubt.

Your very warm eſpouſal of the cauſe of liberty, is the only inducement to this dedication; and permit me to hope, that you may long continue a bright example to your countrymen, of zeal in their cauſe, and that in private life you may be bleſt with every comfort and every endearment that can add to your felicity, is the wiſh of the

YOUNGER JUNIUS.

OBSERV-

OBSERVATIONS, &c.

WILLIAM PITT, Eſq. the ſubject of theſe Obſervations, is the ſecond ſon of the late Earl of Chatham. He was born in the year 1758; and diſcovering very early a turn for caſuiſtry and controverſy, after a decent education, under the tuition of Mr. Prettyman, ſince advanced to the biſhopric of Lincoln, he was entered at Lincoln's-inn, for the ſtudy of the law; a profeſſion for which, by his ſophiſtry, he appeared to be naturally deſigned.

In the year 1781, Mr. Pitt was called to the bar, and, travelling the weſtern circuit, obtained briefs on the memorable election

cauſes at Saliſbury, between Sir John Macpherſon, Mr. Petrie, and Lord Portcheſter. It being his firſt appearance on that ſtage, the cauſes were opened by him; and it is but juſtice to ſay, that the learned judge, Mr. Buller, in ſumming up, declared, with that penetration and foreſight which diſtinguiſh him, that he never had heard a cauſe ſo ably opened as thoſe of that day had been by Mr. Pitt.

A compliment ſo highly flattering to ſo young a man, eſpecially when accompanied by the concurrence of the late Mr. Dunning, who was the ſenior counſel, could not fail to raiſe the expectations, and excite the vanity of our young hero.

Unfortunately, however, for this country, and for Mr. Pitt, this circumſtance operated in a manner totally different to the public expectation; for conceiving that the tide in his fortune was rather to be turned than followed, from that moment Mr. Pitt diſcontinued the ſtudy and purſuit of the law.

Through

Through the intereſt of Sir James Lowther, Mr. Pitt was, in the year 1781, returned for Appleby: his maiden ſpeech in parliament alſo excited the attention and admiration of his auditors; and being made about the cloſe of the American war, when the arrangements were forming for a new adminiſtration, our hero had the *modeſty* and *diffidence* to declare, he would accept no ſubordinate ſituation. So pointed a declaration, not only ſurprized the leaders of the two great parties in parliament, but gave great offence to Mr. Pitt's friends; many of whom being men of ſober judgment and reflection, ſuch an expreſſion, from ſo young a man, juſt entered the grand theatre of the nation, with no more experience than the age of three and twenty affords, could not but be highly diſguſting.

In the Rockingham adminiſtration, Mr. Pitt was offered a ſituation, which he thought proper to decline, as beneath him; conſcious, that in the then diſtracted and unfortunate ſituation of the country, when the

greateſt experience and abilities were neceſſary to relieve her, his abilities could not be ſucceſsfully employed, but in the higheſt office of the ſtate.

At the death of the noble Marquis, an alteration taking place in the miniſtry, Mr. Pitt was offered the Chancellorſhip of the Exchequer—the ſecond in the kingdom, and conſidered as the moſt efficient. Being the miniſter of the houſe of commons, financier, and treaſurer of the public purſe, this, ſo complimentary to his firſt declaration, to his confidence, to his abilities, to his experience, and above all, ſo highly flattering to his vanity, he condeſcended graciouſly to accept.

In that adminiſtration, of which Lord Shelburne, now Marquis of Lanſdowne, was the head, Mr. Pitt had no opportunity, of diſplaying his ſuper-eminent attainments, but in voting for, and approving that peace, which has drawn on his principal a greater ſhare of unpopularity than any miniſter ever experienced, and from which his Grace

of

of Richmond thought proper to eſcape with a whole ſkin.

Why Mr. Pitt had not his ſhare of the odium, as ſecond in council, it has always been difficult to diſcover, unleſs it aroſe from that predilection and partiality, which the people ſometimes retain for their favorites, amidſt all their faults; or whether his youth and inexperience, circumſtances of which *he*, by no means wiſhed to avail himſelf of, were the reaſon.

In conſequence of this peace, after delaying the public buſineſs, by continuing in office ſix weeks againſt the ſenſe of the country, Mr. Pitt reſigned, without reaping the laurels he expected.

In the adminiſtration then formed, conſiſting of the moſt illuſtrious characters in the kingdom, in point of property, ability, and integrity, as it was impoſſible to gratify the vanity of Mr. Pitt, he was not invited to take a part.

At the opening of the ſubſequent ſeſſion of parliament, Mr. Pitt called on the then miniſter to bring forward ſome decided meaſures,

meaſures, for the better government of India, declaring, that he hoped it would be no half meaſure, no palliation, but radically curative of all the evils of the Indian adminiſtration.

Such a meaſure was produced, framed with wiſdom, fraught with energy and vigour, open, reſponſible, and efficient; a more perfect ſyſtem the world never ſaw; but a ridiculous clamour being excited againſt it by Mr. Pitt, it was defeated, and with it, the adminiſtration by which it had been planned.

Our hero, now elate with ſucceſs, again aſcends the chariot of the ſun; and, as if his firſt experience had been ſufficient to ſhew him the rocks and ſhoals of ſuch a ſituation, to the aſtoniſhment of all Europe, he mounts alone.

His firſt meaſure, the India Bill, by which he declared he wiſhed to be proved as a miniſter, and to receive, or loſe the confidence of parliament, was rejected, as inſufficient; and that Mr. Pitt thought this treatment perfectly proper, no man can doubt,

doubt, who recollects, that in the ſubſequent parliament, when it is poſſible, this ſame bill might have been paſſed, another, totally diſſimilar in every reſpect, was introduced. Mr. Pitt, therefore, by his own propoſition, could not expect the confidence of that houſe of commons, and it was perfectly juſtified in with-holding it; yet ſo confident was my hero in the excellence of this meaſure, that he thought proper unequivocally to declare, that he would not adviſe the diſſolution of that parliament, nor would he hold his ſituation, if ſuch a meaſure was adopted :—that he did both, is well known; and it is unneceſſary to deſcant upon it.

A circumſtance occurred at this time, for which Mr. Pitt was extolled beyond all panegyrical example,—the giving Colonel Barré a place, to reduce the penſion liſt; and though he cannot be blamed for giving Mr. Elliot, a very amiable young man, and a lord of the treaſury, a place of, and at pleaſure, worth 2000l. a year, the additional place of remembrancer of the exchequer,

a 2000l.

a 2000l. a year ſinecure alſo, not to reduce the penſion liſt, but for his ſervices to his country, by marrying Lady H. Pitt, yet he ought not to have been praiſed for what, in decency, he could not otherwiſe have beſtowed, in the then ſituation of the country; or, doubtleſs, this Mr. Elliott, Mr. Roſe, or ſome other ſuch worthy gentleman, would have had it.

Since the Revolution, it has been uſual for miniſters to be removed by an addreſs of the houſe of commons, declaring, in general terms, the miniſter did not poſſeſs the confidence of that houſe; but this rule, though Mr. Pitt, by his aforementioned propoſals, could not expect that confidence, was not adhered to, and the parliament was diſſolved.

At the meeting of the new parliament, Mr. Pitt, feeling the plenitude of his power, exerciſed it in a manner diſgraceful to the rights of freedom in general, and of elections in particular, by the continuance of the Weſtminſter ſcrutiny. People of all deſcriptions are ſo well agreed about

about this meaſure, that it would be uſeleſs to diſcuſs it; the bare mention of it being ſufficient to fill the mind with indignation at its abettor.

A new ſyſtem for the government of India was introduced; but as the rejection of it was not to be expected, it was ſo altered in the committee, that it ſcarce poſſeſſed a ſingle feature of its original; from which it may be imagined, Mr. Pitt, when introducing it, only conſidered it as a *rough draft*, a *haſty ſketch*, *looſe hints*, or *ſome ſuch thing*, inſtead of a perfect ſyſtem; but though it had little of Mr. Pitt in it, the little it had ſpoke the hand of my hero;—the extenſion of the Court of Star Chamber, by aboliſhing the trial by jury on gentlemen from India, was perfectly conſiſtent with Mr. Pitt's ideas of liberty.

The ſubſequent bill, to amend and explain this bill; the bill to remove all doubts reſpecting the affairs of India; and above all, the famous declaratory bill, operating as an *ex poſt facto* law, a thing the moſt odious to a free conſtitution, not only de-

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claring that to be the law, which the ſages of the law would have declared otherwiſe, but what Mr. Pitt knew never was meant at the time of paſſing the original, which is proved by the moſt poſitive evidence,—to wit, that ſuch a clauſe had been introduced, but was expunged, in compliance with the wiſhes of the India Directors.

All theſe bills, are ſo many proofs of the want of ſyſtematic arrangements, that it appears more like his grandmother's patch-work carpet, than a plan for the government of a vaſt empire.

However, that the preſent ſtate of the government of India may be defined to the underſtanding of ſuch perſons as may be unwilling to examine ſo many complex bills, it is allowed, that the miniſter for India, whether Mr. Dundas, or any other ſuch worthy gentleman, can make peace or war, conclude any kind of treaty with any principality or power in India, ſend any number of troops, charging the pay out of all the revenues of the Eaſt India Company, raiſe any ſubſidy, direct the application of the

the whole property of the Eaſt India Company, or pocket an hundred thouſand, without conſulting any miniſter, or any part of the executive government, and without being anſwerable himſelf; this is a very pretty power indeed, *properly limited*, and making the charter of the India Company of more *value* than waxed parchment.

The commercial arrangements with Ireland, were of the ſame looſe texture with Mr. Pitt's original India bill; but, happily, by the corrections of Mr. Eden, of changing memory, they were ſo far altered, as not to injure the manufacturing intereſts of this country; a buſineſs, it was totally impoſſible Mr. Pitt could have the leaſt knowledge of.

The financiering plan was equally abſurd, by creating a five per cent. fund, which has never found its proper value; and by which the country has been infinitely a loſer, as three per cents. would have been taken much higher; but Mr. Pitt never ſuppoſed the funds would riſe; and therefore rejected the only circumſtance which would have made the five

per cent. fund valuable,—to wit, the privilege of redeeming at par, without limitation. This, Mr. Thornton, the chairman of the navy bill-holders, to pay whom, this fund was created, offered, provided Mr. Pitt would give up a paltry diſcount of one per cent. amounting to about twenty thouſand pounds; but which, by his uſual pertinacity adhering to, he has loſt ſeveral millions of capital, and ſeveral thouſand pounds annual intereſt to the nation; for the five per cents. having been at 115, the commiſſioners for purchaſing ſtock, might have reduced them to four per cent. as Mr. Pelham did the four to three; and with this, every other fund muſt have ſunk alſo; but by Mr. Pitt's plan, they are irredeemable, 'till twenty-five millions of three per cents. are paid; a day, it is to be feared, at a long diſtance; and when the ſix millions of exchequer bills now floating, and the two millions owing to the bank, are funded, and which time muſt come, ere ſoon or late, the public will judge of the propriety of inveſting a mil-

a million per annum, in the funds, at the preſent price.

The extenſion of the exciſe laws, by giving the power of entry into private houſes by day or night, and the farming the poſt-horſe duty, by encouraging inſolence to travellers, thereby endeavouring to break the ſpirit of a free people, are meaſures, the features of which are peculiarly applicable to the genius of Mr. Pitt.

Whether the fortification ſcheme of Uncle Toby, was a favorite with Mr. Pitt, many have doubted; but when a miniſter ſays, "that it is ſuch a meaſure as the govern-" ment of this country ought to propoſe, " and ſuch an one as this houſe ought to " adopt," it might be inferred, Mr. Pitt approved it, or he never could have made uſe of ſuch an expreſſion.

The pains taken to fritter away the militia, the moſt conſtitutional defence, by ſoldiery, are moſt amply rewarded; as few men of independent principles and property will ſerve in the reduced legions; not that Mr. Pitt ſo much diſlikes ſoldiers,

as

as to neglect augmenting, by every means in his power, that inſtrument of arbitrary government,—the ſtanding army ; and as if like a true lawyer, in ſpirit at leaſt, he had an abſolute averſion to that grand bulwark of liberty, the trial by jury, he has extended martial law to officers by brevet, a hardſhip which deprives many of a travelling title.

With regard to the navy, the moſt favorite and moſt deſerving object of a Britiſh legiſlature, nothing need be ſaid at the diſmiſſion of Lord Howe, and the placing Captain Lord Chatham in his room, is a proof of the miniſter's conſciouſneſs of the impropriety of the late promotions.

It muſt be allowed very fair, to treat of meaſures reſpecting public liberty, tranſacted in Ireland ; as a miniſter, who would exert influence improperly there, would, if poſſible, do the ſame here.

The proceeding alluded to, was, reviving the odious doctrine of attachment, which has long lain dormant ; the practice of granting leave to ſhew cauſe, having univerſally prevailed

prevailed for a conſiderable period ; this was done againſt Dennis O'Reilley, Eſq. high ſheriff of Dublin, who was ſeized violently as a criminal, ſuſpected of felony ; merely for calling, by public advertiſement,—the freeholders of his county to meet on national buſineſs.

Let any man of common candour ſay, what would have been thought of Lord North, had he, in 1780, acted ſimilarly to the ſheriffs of England, who ſummoned their freeholders, and formed county meetings, profeſſedly declaring the influence of the crown was increaſed, and conſulting about meaſures to diminiſh it.

The commercial treaty with France, doing ſo much honor to the negociating abilities of an old friend, and in which my hero had no concern, but the *fiat*; and being a point which will require ſome years to determine the tendendency of, cannot be diſcuſſed here.

What Billy may be doing in Spain, is unknown ; but would he not have been better employed at the Hague ? As Dutch herrings would

would have come eaſy, which, in the end, John Bull may think the moſt preferable of continental connection.

The flouriſhing ſtate of the commerce of the country, has been a ſubject of panegyric with all the miniſter's admirers; but, as Lord Bacon adviſes, "read not "to adopt, or refute an opinion, but "to reflect, underſtand, and improve; and "as the truth always appears clearer for "inveſtigation," let the evidence be examined, and the public will judge impartially, what praiſe Mr. Pitt deſerves on this account.

It muſt be primarily obſerved, that during a war, though the ſeat of it be not in the country which produces manufactures, and exports large quantities of them, yet commerce will always be languid and ſtagnant, not only by all the channels belonging to thoſe powers againſt whom the war is directed, being dried up; but by the ſpirit of ſpeculation and adventure being checked, and by another derivation being found for the money in loan, and other employment for the ſailors

and

any manufacturers in our fleets and armies.

When theſe circumſtances are done away by peace, and the ſluices of commerce are again opened; the trade and manufactures of a country, reviving as it were from its aſhes, receive a new ſpring, by ſupplying the wants of the people, whoſe ſtock has been totally exhauſted during a war, by the regular annual ſupplies being ſtopped, and whoſe demand, therefore, muſt for ſeveral years ſucceeding a peace, be greater than the uſual average, for ſeveral of the laſt years preceding a war.

The preſent ſtate of our commerce, therefore, admitting it to be as flouriſhing as the miniſter's friends deſcribe, is an effect ariſing from very natural cauſes, totally independent of any any artificial aſſiſtance of Mr. Pitt; and it is conſidered as an admitted principle, that though a peculiar form of government may be favorable to commerce, yet it is not in the power of any adminiſtration to force it, though there can be no doubt, that proper municipal regulations

will ſtrengthen its ſinews; but it is impoſſible to conceive, how a tax on retail ſhops can have that effect.

Similar cauſes operating on the funds, have produced a like effect, by the money expended abroad for the payment and maintenance of our fleets and armies, returning to this country, either in the ſhape of fortunes made by contractors, commanders, or adventurers, or as payment of commercial debts contracted prior to the war; which were, during that period in limine; and no loans being wanted, the rate of intereſt by private annuities and mortgages being lowered, government ſecurities are conſequently preferred; and the greater the demand, the higher will the price naturally be.

The preſent ſtate of the revenue depending on the circumſtances of increaſed exportation, to ſtock countries exhauſted by a long war, and on their increaſed conſumption at home; by having neither fleets or armies abroad, as was the caſe when the taxes were impoſed, is very rationally accounted

counted for, without affording Mr. Pitt any praiſe.

The public credit of the country is under ſuch obligations to the miniſter, that nothing leſs than conferring on him the place of director general of the finances for life, can compenſate the advantages which muſt accrue from having brought between three and four millions of 3 per cents, at 70 and 75; and refunding this four millions at 60 and 65, to diſcharge in part, only ſix millions of exchequer bills, and two millions owing to the bank, which ſome time or other muſt be liquidated, by funding, unleſs Mr. Pitt expects, as perhaps he may, that this money will drop into the Exchequer from the clouds, or that he ſhall diſcover alchemy.

Thoſe people who have inveſted money in the funds, upon the viſionary idea of their being paid off, will be obliged to Mr. Pitt, beyond all conception, when the ſums beforementioned are funded, which muſt neceſſarily produce a great fall of ſtocks; of this my hero ſeems well aware, by deferring the evil

day ; or he would, ere now, have borrowed ten millions to pay off all deficiencies ; and leſs than that will not put the credit of the country on a proper footing ; and that this meaſure had better be done before a war, every man, without being converſant in finance, muſt be well aware, as by how much it is eaſier to borrow a ſmall ſum, than a large one, which immediately on a war, would be wanted.

The very comfortable addition to the houſe of lords, thereby ſecuring a fuller attendance in cold weather, by which means their lordſhips are kept warm, without debate, eſpecially as the lords, Richmond, Lanſdowne, and Stanhope, are not always preſent, is ſcarce worth noticing, eſpecially as it is the effort of a virgin miniſter, wiſhing to demonſtrate his creative powers, without loſing his immaculation ; and that this was the principal reaſon, cannot be doubted, when it is known, that Lord North, in four years, cauſed ſcarce one to be created, and in twelve years not more than half the number,

ber his virginity has in the former period; but Lord North was a man in another way.

A little diſpleaſure may probably be felt; not on account of the perſons who have been thus honored, poſſeſſing great influence in the houſe of commons, but on account of the reverſionary intereſt ſo frequently granted, which can be accounted for no other way, than by ſuppoſing, that Mr. Pitt was determined, that *ex nihilo nihil fit*, ſhould not be applied to him in every ſenſe.

The deliberative powers, the advice and aſſiſtance of Jenkinſon (Lord Hawkeſbury) are beyond all eſtimation; the public muſt cordially approve of the removal of Lord Tankerville, from the Poſt-office, to accommodate him, independent of the endeavors of Lord Tankerville to reform this department, and render it leſs corrupt, a circumſtance of itſelf ſufficient to remove any man.

As a board of trade, with a ſalary to the preſident of 1000l. a year, is contrary to the

the letter of Mr. Burke's bill; and as Lord Hawkeſbury cannot, more than other people, ſerve his country for nothing, Mr. Pitt's ſpirit in providing ſo handſomely for him, by the Chancellorſhip of the Duchy of Lancaſter, a place of three times the above value, cannot be ſufficiently applauded; but ſo great a favorite as the noble lord is with the public, it is much to be regretted they were not intruſted with the inveſtiture of the chain and collar.

The ſtriking features of Mr. Pitt's adminiſtration have been recapitulated; little things are beneath notice; it is for the public, to whom this appeal is made, to judge candidly of the advantages hitherto derived from it, and how far it may be deſirable to have it lengthened.

If the good of the people be the ſupreme law, and the end of all government, the people muſt, they ought to, and they will, decide the queſtion.

It is poſſible an objection may be made againſt charging Mr. Pitt with all the blunders and incapacities of his adminiſtration; but

but the conſtitution particularly conſiders the perſon, holding the offices Mr. Pitt does, as perſonally reſponſible for every meaſure of the adminiſtration to which he belongs; and the propriety of this is very evident; for by ſhifting it in flagrant inſtances of mal-adminiſtration, it might be impoſſible to fix on a victim of public juſtice and puniſhment; a circumſtance neceſſary to be held *in terrorem*; though as the moſt able writer on the laws and conſtitution ſays, the removal, and not the puniſhment of obnoxious miniſters, is all that ought to be deſired.

In concluding, there can be no impropriety, in intreating Mr. Wilberforce, and the *World* will ſay a better man could not have been named, to pray, that the review of theſe tranſactions may ſo lighten, either the darkneſs of his friend's mind, or the obſcurity of underſtanding, that when ten years more experience ſhall have been added to him, an atonement may be made for the errors of the paſt, by rendering ſome good ſervices to the country in future.

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